

UNITED STATES DISTRICT COURT
SOUTHERN DISTRICT OF NEW YORK

ERIC T. BAKER,

Plaintiff,

-against-

YALE LAW SCHOOL,

Defendant.

22-CV-3222 (LTS)

TRANSFER ORDER

LAURA TAYLOR SWAIN, Chief United States District Judge:

Plaintiff Eric T. Baker, who resides in New York, New York, brings this action *pro se* against Defendant Yale Law School, which is located in New Haven, Connecticut. For the following reasons, the Court transfers this action to the United States District Court for the District of Connecticut.

DISCUSSION

Under the general venue provision, a federal civil action may be brought in:

(1) a judicial district in which any defendant resides, if all defendants are residents of the State in which the district is located; (2) a judicial district in which a substantial part of the events or omissions giving rise to the claim occurred . . . ; or (3) if there is no district in which an action may otherwise be brought as provided in this section, any judicial district in which any defendant is subject to the court's personal jurisdiction with respect to such action.

Under § 1391(c), a “natural person” resides in the district where the person is domiciled, and an “entity with the capacity to sue and be sued” resides in any judicial district where it is subject to personal jurisdiction with respect to the civil action in question. *See* 28 U.S.C. § 1391(c)(1), (2).

Plaintiff does not allege where the events giving rise to his claims occurred, but Yale Law School, which is the sole Defendant in this action, is located in the District of Connecticut. *See* 28 U.S.C. § 86. Because the Defendant is located in Connecticut, and the events giving rise to Plaintiff’s claims most likely occurred in Connecticut, venue is likely proper in the District of

Connecticut. *See* § 1391(b)(2). While it appears unlikely that this Court would be an appropriate venue for this action under Section 1391(b)(1), it is clear that the United States District Court for the District of Connecticut is a proper venue for this action under Section 1391(b)(1), and likely under Section 1391(b)(2).

Even if it were proper for this Court to consider Plaintiff's claims, transfer of this action appears to be appropriate. The Court may transfer claims “[f]or the convenience of the parties and witnesses, in the interest of justice.” 28 U.S.C. § 1404(a). “District courts have broad discretion in making determinations of convenience under Section 1404(a) and notions of convenience and fairness are considered on a case-by-case basis.” *D.H. Blair & Co. v. Gottdiener*, 462 F.3d 95, 106 (2d Cir. 2006). Moreover, courts may transfer cases on their own initiative. *See Cento v. Pearl Arts & Craft Supply Inc.*, No. 03-CV-2424 (LAK), 2003 WL 1960595, at *1 (S.D.N.Y. Apr. 24, 2003) (“Courts have an independent institutional concern to see to it that the burdens of litigation that is unrelated to the forum that a party chooses are not imposed unreasonably on jurors and judges who have enough to do in determining cases that are appropriately before them. The power of district courts to transfer cases under Section 1404(a) *sua sponte* therefore is well established.”); *see also Lead Indus. Ass'n. Inc. v. OSHA*, 610 F.2d 70, 79 n.17 (2d Cir. 1979) (noting that the “broad language of 28 U.S.C. § 1404(a) would seem to permit a court to order transfer *sua sponte*”).

In determining whether transfer is appropriate, courts consider the following factors: (1) the convenience of witnesses; (2) the convenience of the parties; (3) the locus of operative facts; (4) the availability of process to compel the attendance of the unwilling witnesses; (5) the location of relevant documents and the relative ease of access to sources of proof; (6) the relative means of the parties; (7) the forum’s familiarity with the governing law; (8) the weight accorded

to the plaintiff's choice of forum; (9) trial efficiency; and (10) the interest of justice, based on the totality of circumstances. *Keitt v. N.Y. City*, 882 F. Supp. 2d 412, 458-59 (S.D.N.Y. 2011); *see also N.Y. Marine and Gen. Ins. Co. v. LaFarge No. Am., Inc.*, 599 F.3d 102, 112 (2d Cir. 2010) (setting forth similar factors). A plaintiff's choice of forum is accorded less deference where plaintiff does not reside in the chosen forum and the operative events did not occur there. *See Iragorri v. United Tech. Corp.*, 274 F.3d 65, 72 (2d Cir. 2001).

Under Section 1404(a), transfer appears to be appropriate in this case. Defendant is located in the District of Connecticut, where it is likely that the events giving rise to Plaintiff's claims occurred, and any relevant documents and witnesses are likely located in that judicial district. Based on the totality of the circumstances, the Court concludes that it is in the interest of justice to transfer this action to the United States District Court for the District of Connecticut.

See § 1404(a).

CONCLUSION

The Clerk of Court is directed to transfer this action to the United States District Court for the District of Connecticut. Whether Plaintiff should be permitted to proceed further without prepayment of fees is a determination to be made by the transferee court. A summons shall not issue from this Court. This order closes this case.

The Court certifies under 28 U.S.C. § 1915(a)(3) that any appeal from this order would not be taken in good faith, and therefore *in forma pauperis* status is denied for the purpose of an

appeal. *Cf. Coppedge v. United States*, 369 U.S. 438, 444-45 (1962) (holding that an appellant demonstrates good faith when he seeks review of a nonfrivolous issue).

SO ORDERED.

Dated: April 21, 2022
New York, New York

/s/ Laura Taylor Swain
LAURA TAYLOR SWAIN
Chief United States District Judge